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The seventh in a series of inservice teacher education units is devoted to improving the language skills of disadvantaged students. Part I discusses standard and nonstandard English, and the structural and functional interferences posed by the language systems used by disadvantaged pupils. Part II is devoted to the dialects used by Negro and Appalachian pupils, Negro slang, and techniques which are effective for teaching standard English. Included are two sample lessons. Part III focuses on the language problems of Mexican American children posed by their bilingualism. The important points presented in the unit are summarized, and discussion questions and a bibliography are included. For other units in this series see UD 005 366, UD 005 367, UD 006 843, UD 006 842, UD 007 191, and UD 005 472. (NH)

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Unit Seven
April 1, 1967

Improving the Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged

UD 006 841

ONE-YEAR

SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT

GRADES K-12

By Kenneth R. Johnson

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Science Research Associates, Inc., 259 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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TEACHING CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

(Grades K-12)

by

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Unit VII: Improving Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged

(April 1, 1967)

Seventh of Eight-Unit Series Appearing First of Each Month
From October 1, 1966, Through May 1, 1967

UD 006 841

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PREFACE

One of the foremost challenges in American education today is that of educating the culturally disadvantaged pupils. To help them achieve in school, it is necessary for educators to understand them and their problems. This SRA extension service, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, for grades K to 12, is specifically designed to help teachers understand the culturally disadvantaged, to offer suggestions and techniques for teaching the culturally disadvantaged, to stimulate thought and promote discussion among teachers of the culturally disadvantaged, and to serve as a guide to the really valuable writing and research on the problem. For several years, SRA extension services have been used by thousands of educators as a framework and background resources for monthly in-service meetings, emphasizing study of problems related to classroom teaching.

This series, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, is being offered for the first time in 1966-67. Each monthly unit deals in a concise, nontechnical manner with one phase of the subject. While this extension service is primarily designed for use in in-service education meetings, its comprehensive coverage and many practical suggestions for regular classroom teaching can also be valuable for private study by individual educators.

The following units are included in this series for 1966-67:

UNIT ONE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part I (October)
UNIT TWO: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part II (November)
UNIT THREE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Negro Student (December)
UNIT FOUR: Other Culturally Disadvantaged Groups (January)
UNIT FIVE: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part I (February)
UNIT SIX: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part II (March)
UNIT SEVEN: Improving Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged (April)
UNIT EIGHT: Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Culturally Disadvantaged Students (May)

The author of this series is Mr. Kenneth R. Johnson, Consultant, Division of Secondary Education, Los Angeles City School Districts, Los Angeles, California. For the past year he has specialized in the problem of educating the culturally disadvantaged, particularly the problems of teaching language and reading. He has conducted numerous institutes and lectures on the disadvantaged student at teacher workshops, conferences, and the colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area.

Born in a disadvantaged area of Chicago, the author worked in the post office for five years and served two years in the army before attending college at Wilson Junior College, Chicago Teachers College, and the University of Chicago (B.A., M.A.). He has done graduate work at San Jose State

College, and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Southern California. All of his teaching experience has been in schools that had culturally disadvantaged populations.

We urge the school administrator or other educator receiving this extension service on Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils to assign to some one interested and competent person or committee in your school the responsibility for making the best use of each unit.

The booklets in this extension service will arrive about the first of each month, October through May. This issue contains Unit Seven. We hope it will provide valuable help and practical information to those involved in education.

Dorothy Ericson
Project Director

Paul T. Kosiak, Director
SRA Educational Services

April 1967

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UNIT SEVEN: IMPROVING LANGUAGE SKILLS OF THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Standard English

Throughout this series, many areas in which culturally disadvantaged pupils are handicapped by their background have been discussed. This unit is concerned with one more of these handicapping areas: language. The problem is that most culturally disadvantaged pupils speak nonstandard varieties of English. The language handicap of culturally disadvantaged pupils is especially crucial because of the restrictions it imposes on academic achievement, vocational opportunity, and social advancement. This implies that language--specifically, standard English--is one of the keys to unlock the shackles of deprivation. That is, if culturally disadvantaged pupils acquire the ability to speak standard English their chances for success are increased. This, indeed, seems to be the case. Many disadvantaged persons who have improved their status have also acquired the ability to speak standard English, or they have eliminated from their speech those items which most negatively affect chances for academic, social, and vocational success. (The ways that nonstandard speech affects chances for success will be discussed below.) Of course, acquiring the ability to speak standard English does not ensure success for disadvantaged pupils --they also have to acquire other middle-class patterns; but the ability to speak standard English (or come close to it) is one of the essentials for success.

The role of the school in helping culturally disadvantaged pupils learn standard English is obvious. First of all, language is one area in which the school can affect behavioral changes. Secondly, behavioral changes in the area of language are essential for academic success. Thus, teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils standard English is really one of the most important tasks of the school.

Definition of Language

Language can be defined as "systematic noises people make with their vocal chords, and these systematic noises carry meaning." The most important word in this definition is systematic. The noises people make just

aren't unorganized or random noises that only stimulate other people's ears like the roar of traffic or the rustle of leaves. Instead, these noises stimulate other people's intellects and emotions, causing them to understand the ideas and feelings of the person making the noises. In other words, these noises communicate. A group of people making the same or nearly the same systematic noises are speaking the same language, and they can communicate with each other. Communication is adversely affected to: degree these noises differ from the system of the group; and this, in a nutshell, is the language problem of culturally disadvantaged pupils. In addition, when these noises are symbolically represented in the form of writing, communication occurs through the process of reading. The problem of understanding written communication (reading) is compounded for culturally disadvantaged pupils because they are required to derive meaning from symbols that stand for a variety of the language that is not quite the same in sound, grammar, and vocabulary as their own variety of the language.

Perhaps it seems unnecessary--even impertinent--to begin this unit with a definition of language. It really isn't. Again, it is essential to refer to the word systematic that was included in the definition of language. Even though the varieties of English spoken by culturally disadvantaged pupils are nonstandard (that is, these varieties are not the same as the English spoken by the dominant culture) the varieties are systematic. When culturally disadvantaged pupils try to learn standard English, their language system interferes with the standard English system and handicaps learning. These interferences can be dialect interferences as in the case of many Negro and Appalachian culturally disadvantaged pupils, or native language interferences as in the case of Mexican-American or Puerto Rican culturally disadvantaged pupils. The language of culturally disadvantaged pupils, too, is systematic--and it fits the definition of language given above. The point is, whatever language--or variety of a language--a person speaks interferes with learning another language--or variety of a language. Interference is caused by the person imposing the sound and grammatical system of his own language on the language to be learned.

Many teachers are reluctant to recognize or admit that nonstandard English has its own "rules of grammar." Instead, nonstandard English is considered simply incorrect English, or the result of "lazy tongues and lazy lips." A few teachers even look on nonstandard English as an inherent evil which reflects the quality of the speaker. In other words, "bad language, bad people." This is unfortunate, because the particular language system a person uses has nothing to do with the worth and dignity of the person. The fact that some people in our society do equate nonstandard English with negative personality qualities is one more reason that speakers of nonstandard English learn standard English. Again, it must be pointed out that language is learned--it is not inherent or genetically determined. Further, the language one learns is accidental. Nonstandard English tells nothing about a person's social status and the hardships and tragedies--the deprivations--that nonstandard English sometimes echoes.

In summary, the English of culturally disadvantaged pupils (or the English of the lower classes) is sometimes thought of as an inferior brand of standard English; or the language of culturally disadvantaged pupils

is sometimes thought of as being at one end of a linguistic continuum that stretches from incorrect to correct. Throughout this unit, the English of culturally disadvantaged pupils is viewed as separate systems (depending on the particular cultural background) related to but distinct from standard English.

If this view is unacceptable, perhaps the following experiment will make it more acceptable. Teachers should select from the English of culturally disadvantaged pupils one pronunciation or grammatical item that deviates from standard English and try to incorporate this item into their English. For example, teachers can try to incorporate into their speech the sound many Mexican-American pupils say for the sound represented in English spelling by the letters ch; or teachers can try to incorporate the conjugation of the verb to be many Negro pupils use in their speech. This experiment will illustrate the systematic nature of nonstandard English, and it will also illustrate the concept of interference of one language system with another. Finally, this experiment will illustrate the difficulty speakers of a nonstandard variety of English have in learning standard English.

Interference

Thus, the language of culturally disadvantaged pupils should not be considered as simply incorrect or careless; instead, the language of culturally disadvantaged pupils should be considered as a different system that interferes--systematically--with the learning of standard English.

The point of view the school has on the language of these pupils makes a great deal of difference in how language instruction is conducted for culturally disadvantaged pupils. If the school has the first point of view (this is the traditional and common point of view), then language instruction is mostly in the form of correcting pupils every time their English differs from standard English. For example, telling a pupil that he can't say "them boys" for "those boys" or "mouf" for "mouth" doesn't do a bit of good if in his language system "them" is a plural marker before nouns, and the final sound in "mouth" is /f/ (he may not even be able to hear the final sound in "mouth"). The proof that the traditional point of view causes ineffective language instruction for most culturally disadvantaged pupils is that many of these pupils leave school after twelve years still speaking the nonstandard variety they spoke when they entered school. In fact, they often speak the nonstandard variety even better, because when they were younger they were still learning the language of their group, and like all young children they made mistakes (that is, they did not follow the system of their group's language). In those instances where disadvantaged pupils did acquire standard English by the time they left school, the reasons they acquired standard English may be due as much to other factors as to school instruction.

If the school takes the second point of view (the language of culturally disadvantaged pupils systematically interferes with their learning standard English), then instruction takes a different approach. Instruction is based on the conflicts between their language and standard English. For example, pupils who say "them boys" are shown the contrast between the way their language system uses plural markers before nouns and the way standard English uses plural markers. They are shown that "them boys" is equivalent to "those boys." This contrast is followed by oral drill to establish the standard English pattern. If pupils say "mouf" for "mouth" they are first taught to discriminate between the ending sound of "mouth" and the ending sound of "mouf." Next, they are given extensive oral drills for reproducing the ending sound of "mouth." In other words, the instructional approach of the second point of view bases language instruction on the language of the pupils and the interferences, or conflicts, caused by their language. Unfortunately, not many language programs are conducted from this point of view. This kind of language instruction is consistent with the best practices for teaching a second language. Standard English can be treated almost like a foreign language in programs for culturally disadvantaged pupils.

So far, a definition of standard English has not been given. This is as good a point as any to give a definition. First, what standard English is not should be pointed out. Standard English is not the language of Dick and Jane. It is not the language of the pedantic English textbooks used at the higher levels of education. And it certainly isn't the stuffy affectacious English of dowagers in any city's "four hundred." Instead, standard English is that English ". . . used to carry on the important affairs of our country," as Charles Fries, the noted linguist, has stated. In other words, standard English is that language system that is acceptable and understood by the vast majority of the people in our society, even those who may speak a nonstandard variety of English. It is the "universal dialect" of our society. It is the English spoken by most government officials, TV announcers, and educated people. More importantly, it is the language of the classroom.

Language Learning

Children begin to learn language long before they enter school. Children born into a middle-class culture learn the language of a middle-class culture; children born into a disadvantaged subculture or a different culture learn the language of one or the other--and this is not the language of the middle-class culture, the language for success. The child's first language teachers are his parents. If the parents speak a nonstandard variety of English, the child undoubtedly learns a nonstandard variety of English. Furthermore, the culture into which children are born continues to reinforce the particular language system of that culture in many ways. The obvious reinforcement is from just hearing the language of a particular culture. Because there is little contact with persons outside the culture, young children have little opportunity for learning the language system of

another culture. For culturally disadvantaged children, this lack of opportunity for coming into contact with the language system of middle-class culture is penalizing. In addition, children who grow up in a disadvantaged culture will have the experiences of a disadvantaged culture; and these experiences influence their language development in a way that does not fit the middle-class curriculum. Also, disadvantaged children do not have many of the necessary experiences that positively influence language by developing concepts that form a base for language growth to fit a middle-class curriculum.

Children in the primary grades have ordinarily mastered the sound system and the basic grammatical system of the language of their culture. And if the children are culturally disadvantaged it is at this time that the school begins the painful and, usually, unsuccessful process of teaching them standard English.

Qualitative Difference Between Nonstandard and Standard English

The difference in sound, grammar, and vocabulary between standard English and nonstandard English has been indicated. There is also a qualitative difference between the two varieties of English. The qualitative difference does not mean that one language system is inherently better than the other. What it does mean is that one language system (standard English) is better in the dominant culture and, specifically, in the curriculum of the school. Some investigators have pointed out that the qualitative difference between standard and nonstandard English is most pronounced in vocabulary. Culturally disadvantaged pupils usually lack words that show fine distinctions within concepts. They lack synonyms. Furthermore, they often use a great many cant or slang words, and they don't encounter these words outside their own cultural group. Thus, many of the words they use among themselves are not very useful with others or in the classroom. In addition, they lack the vocabulary of others and the classroom. But the qualitative difference between the vocabulary of standard and nonstandard English is much more than a lack of words or different and fewer words within conceptual areas. The qualitative difference in vocabulary is a reflection of a qualitative difference in experience. Vocabulary is an outgrowth of experience. Stated another way, experiences are the building blocks of concepts, and words are symbols of concepts. If children lack experiences their conceptual development and vocabulary will be restricted; or if they have different experiences, their conceptual development and vocabulary will not be the same as others. In short, vocabulary reflects culture and if the culture is disadvantaged then the vocabulary it generates will be disadvantaged also.

An important point that must be added, however, is that whatever is important or common in a culture will be expressed. Thus, in some areas disadvantaged pupils have as many or even more words for certain things. For example, disadvantaged pupils have a great many words related to aggression. Within each disadvantaged group there is a large vocabulary on fighting, the kinds of blows delivered during fighting and anger.

Handicaps of Nonstandard English

Some investigators have also pointed out that there is a qualitative difference in grammatical structure between standard and nonstandard speech. These investigators have pointed out that nonstandard speech consists of short simple sentences, repetitive use of conjunctions, little use of subordinate clauses, a lack of tenses, etc. Furthermore, the "restrictive" grammatical structure (coupled with a restrictive vocabulary) may handicap culturally disadvantaged pupils in performing some of the cognitive functions necessary for achievement. For example, some investigators have suggested that culturally disadvantaged pupils may be handicapped in such cognitive functions as contrasting, generalizing, symbolizing, defining, etc. If this is true, then the handicaps this places on achievement is obvious.

Also obvious is the way nonstandard language handicaps culturally disadvantaged pupils in learning to read. Of course, their language system is not the only thing that handicaps them in learning to read. Their impoverished experiential backgrounds, their inefficient learning style, their value system, the inappropriateness of textbook content to their interests and backgrounds, and the general orientation and structure of the curriculum are other factors that affect their ability to read. Their nonstandard language, however, is probably the most significant factor.

The great difficulty caused by language in teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils to read is that their language system keeps interfering with the language of the reading text. This is essentially the same difficulty in teaching them to speak standard English and to understand the structure of standard English. The interference in reading occurs between the vocabulary, sound, and grammar of standard and nonstandard English.

Many of the words in textbooks are not a part of the vocabulary of culturally disadvantaged pupils, and this makes it difficult for them to read these words. Teaching children to read words they already know is simpler than teaching them to read unknown words. Thus, increasing the vocabulary of culturally disadvantaged pupils--specifically, giving them a variety of experiences that develop conceptual growth and vocabulary--should be stressed before formal reading instruction. This suggests that reading instruction for these pupils be delayed, and that is exactly what many educators who are familiar with the learning problems of culturally disadvantaged pupils are suggesting. Perhaps formal reading instruction should be delayed until after they have finished the primary grades. The emphasis in the primary grades could then be exclusively placed on language instruction. This is not really a radical proposal. First of all, can anyone think of a logical or practical reason why a first, second, or third grader should know how to read? After all, what <u>is</u> there for these pupils to read that is so important? Besides, they can't read anything very well until they adequately understand the language of the reading material. Secondly, culturally disadvantaged pupils start school far behind average pupils and most of them never catch up, particularly in reading. In fact,

what usually happens is that the achievement gap between them and middle-class pupils grows wider as grade levels increase. Delaying reading instruction until after the primary grades increases this gap at the beginning of their school careers, but it gives them a much better chance of closing the gap in later grades--something that few culturally disadvantaged pupils accomplish, in spite of all the remedial reading programs and reading improvement programs designed to close the gap.

Thus, delaying reading instruction and emphasizing language instruction will help culturally disadvantaged pupils acquire the necessary experiences and vocabulary for learning to read.

The sound system of nonstandard English also handicaps culturally disadvantaged pupils in learning to read. For example, these pupils may not be able to hear certain sounds in some words, because their particular language system does not contain these sounds in the same way as standard English. Yet, these pupils are expected to read and pronounce words that are inaccurately represented by the English alphabet. For example, some Negro pupils say "rat," the teacher says "rite," and the textbook represents the teacher's standard pronunciation with "right." These pupils are dealing with one word represented three different ways.

Another way nonstandard English affects ability to read is caused by consonant or consonant cluster dropping at the ends of words. Many disadvantaged pupils speak a variety of English that omits the sounds represented by consonants at the ends of words. This causes difficulty in reading by increasing the number of homonyms. Also, the inflectional signals for meaning are missed by the reader. For example, the pupils who speak a dialect may read the sentence "We walked to school" as "We walk to school." The failure to "hear" and read preterit ending changes the tense of the sentence and gives an unintended meaning to the sentence.

Finally, nonstandard speakers impose the grammar of their language system on reading. That is, they often "translate" reading into their particular system and meaning may be confused in the translation. For example, many pupils who speak a dialect of English may read the sentence "We have taken a walk" as "We taken a walk." At first glance, it seems as if only the word "have" is omitted--not too serious an error. However, if these pupils use the past participle form of take (which is taken) for the past tense form (took) then the sentence takes on an unintended tense, thus an unintended meaning.

Reading errors caused by nonstandard interferences are difficult to detect unless teachers know the language system of the pupils. Teachers who are unfamiliar with the language system of the pupils may confuse simple reading mistakes with pronunciation and grammatical interferences. Thus, it is important that teachers understand the language system of the pupils. Also, in reading instruction it may be desirable to spend more time on the function of certain inflectional endings that have no function in the language system of the pupils. This means that pupils must be made to recognize, for example, the preterit ending -<u>ed</u> on words as signaling past tense even though they may not pronounce it. Some nonstandard speakers

already do this during reading and they may understand the sentence "We walked to school" as being past tense even though they don't pronounce the past tense -ed inflection. Thus, if the teacher points out to these pupils that the sentence refers to past action, it may confuse these pupils because this is exactly the way they understood the sentence!

Of course, interference from the nonstandard variety of English of culturally disadvantaged pupils occurs when they attempt to express their ideas in writing. Their sound and grammar system is reflected in their writing and it causes difficulty for those who read it.

The importance of understanding the language systems of culturally disadvantaged pupils cannot be stressed too much. This understanding increases the teacher's effectiveness in reading and language instruction by helping the teacher distinguish between mistakes and interference. The difficulties in learning caused by these two handicaps in learning should not be treated in the same manner. Furthermore, understanding the pupils' language system helps teachers increase communication during ordinary conversation with the pupils.

The negative effect nonstandard language has on academic achievement, especially in reading, also affects vocational opportunity. Without education, chances for vocational and economic advancement are limited. Also, nonstandard language imposes a limit on the kinds of jobs disadvantaged pupils may obtain after they leave school. People who speak a nonstandard variety of English find it difficult to get jobs requiring verbal contact with the general public, especially if the contact requires extensive use of the telephone. The difficulty of understanding speakers of a nonstandard variety of English are amplified by the telephone.

If vocational opportunities are restricted, then chances for social advancement are restricted because low-paying jobs can't support a middle-class way of life. In addition, many individuals in the dominant culture have a negative reaction to nonstandard speech. Persons who speak a nonstandard variety of English may be rejected by members in the dominant culture on the basis of language alone. This means that even if a culturally disadvantaged individual satisfies all the prerequisites for entering and being accepted into the dominant culture, he still may be rejected because of his nonstandard language.

Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Standard English

Teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils standard English is necessary for academic, vocational, and social success. The difficulties in teaching them standard English are enormous because of the interference of their language system with the system of standard English. This is a structural interference. There is another kind of interference that contributes to the difficulty because culturally disadvantaged pupils may not recognize the need or have the desire to learn standard English. This is a functional

interference. Many of these pupils cannot realize any advantage in learning standard English. From their point of view, they are right. Standard English is a language system that is not functional in their cultural environment (just as their language system is nonfunctional in the dominant culture.) Learning standard English sets them off from their primary group and identifies them with a group that has rejected them. Ruth I. Golden reports that Negro high school pupils won't speak standard English because they feel their friends and family wouldn't understand them, and that their friends and family would consider them "uppity" if they spoke standard English. [1]

Thus structural and functional interferences make it doubly difficult to teach standard English to speakers of nonstandard English; yet, they must be taught standard English. There is little the school can do. To overcome functional interference will require basic changes in the attitude of society toward culturally disadvantaged people. Society must quit rejecting them. Also, the culturally disadvantaged population must be given greater opportunity to participate in the dominant culture--or, at least, to know that the opportunity exists if they are prepared. In this way, they can recognize a need to learn standard English; greater participation will also increase meaningful contact with standard English speakers, and this kind of contact can reinforce the classroom instruction in language.

The schools can, however, deal with the structural interference and all this requires is a change in attitude or point of view of the language of culturally disadvantaged pupils. Essentially, the school must quit trying to teach them standard English while ignoring the influences their language has on learning. The following parts of this unit will suggest some methods for teaching standard English to groups of culturally disadvantaged pupils.

The language program for culturally disadvantaged pupils does not vary in sequence from the language program for middle-class pupils; it should, however, vary in the time spent on certain steps in the sequence and the instructional approach. The increase in time spent on steps in the sequence should be both horizontal (more time within a grade level) and vertical (more grade levels for some steps).

Briefly, the sequence of the language program is: understanding spoken English, speaking one's own language, reading, writing, and speaking standard English.

In the primary grades, the emphasis in language should be on encouraging children to use their own language system even if the language system is nonstandard. For culturally disadvantaged primary pupils, this means that the language program should include many activities that elicit verbal responses from the pupils. Some activities that stimulate verbal responses are working with puppets, playing the roles of familiar people, and taking

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[1] Ruth I. Golden, Improving Patterns of Language Usage (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960).

field trips (field trips are any excursions outside the classroom). The purpose of these activities is to get the pupils to talk. Another purpose of these activities for primary pupils is to get them to think with their own language and formulate concepts in their own language. After these pupils have gained concepts using their own language system, they can use these concepts as a foundation for further learning in later grades. Too often, formal language instruction is introduced too early, before culturally disadvantaged pupils have learned to use their own language system; and early introduction of formal language instruction in standard English confuses young children and prevents the formation of necessary concepts for further learning.

In the middle grades, the emphasis in language should be on helping pupils discriminate between the sound systems of their own language and standard English. The language program in the middle grades should include many listening activities that require the pupils to hear final consonant clusters, beginning and medial sounds, and inflectional endings. Furthermore, these listening exercises should be designed to focus attention on the points of interference between the pupils' language system and standard English. For example, if the students substitute a /d/ sound for the sound at the beginning of words like that, the, and this, they should be given listening exercises that require them to distinguish between the beginning sounds of dan, dish, doze, and the beginning sounds of than, this, and those. The tape recorder is a useful device for this kind of activity. The emphasis in the middle grades should be on listening because pupils must hear the sounds of standard English before they can speak standard English.

In the upper grades of elementary school and in the secondary school, the language emphasis should be on helping pupils speak standard English. The focus on sound discrimination between their language and standard English should continue; in addition, the grammatical interferences between the two language systems should be dealt with. For example, many Negro pupils do not have the ending sound on verbs in the third person singular, present tense (i.e., He go to the store. She talk too much). They must be shown the difference between the way they use verbs in the third person singular, present tense and the way standard English uses verbs in the third person singular, present tense. After they can tell this difference, they should be given practice and drill in using the standard English pattern for third person singular, present tense. Many of the methods for teaching English as a second language can be used at the upper elementary and secondary levels. The emphasis, then, in the language program for culturally disadvantaged pupils in the upper grades, should focus on the sound and grammar interferences between their language and standard English. These are structural interferences.

In addition, the functional interferences should be dealt with in the upper grades (particularly in the secondary grades). This means that pupils should be made aware of the advantages of learning standard English.

The emphasis in language instruction at each grade level (primary, middle, and upper) is the same for all culturally disadvantaged pupils, regardless of their particular linguistic backgrounds. The approach in

teaching standard English, however, will vary according to their particular linguistic backgrounds. Many culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American and Puerto Rican pupils have difficulty learning standard English because of native language (Spanish) interferences. Thus, the approach in the language program for them should be similar to teaching English as a second language to the foreign speaking, or they should be given a remedial program to help them overcome native language interferences. Many culturally disadvantaged Negro and Appalachian pupils speak a nonstandard dialect of English. Because they rely on this language system to communicate with others in their primary environment, they do not often give it up. Thus, standard English should be taught to them as an alternate dialect to be used in appropriate situations. For all groups, the language program must be based on the particular interferences between their language and standard English. This means that the language programs for culturally disadvantaged pupils must be designed to take account of the particular problems of each group. In the past, the school has given the same language program to <u>all</u> pupils. Perhaps this is the reason so many pupils leave school still speaking the nonstandard variety of English they spoke when they entered school.

PART II: TEACHING STANDARD ENGLISH TO CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED NEGRO AND APPALACHIAN PUPILS

In Part I, it was pointed out how culturally disadvantaged pupils who speak a nonstandard variety of English are handicapped academically, vocationally, and socially. Many Negro and Appalachian culturally disadvantaged pupils are affected this way. Specifically, their language problem is: culturally disadvantaged Negro and Appalachian pupils speak dialects of English that are nonstandard.

Definition of Dialect

A dialect is "a variety of a language (in this case, a variety of English) that differs in sound, grammar, and vocabulary from that variety of the language that is considered standard." In America, there are a number of dialects--for example, New England, South Eastern, Midlands, etc. These are geographical dialects, or varieties of English that are spoken by most of the people in a particular area of the country. There are also social dialects in America. Social dialects are varieties of English that are spoken by a particular ethnic and/or social class within the population. No clean division can be made between what is strictly a geographical dialect and what is strictly a social dialect. Obviously, the variety of language spoken by people belonging to a particular social class is influenced by the variety of language that is considered standard for a particular geographical area. Still, social dialect is a useful term to identify the variety of language spoken by people who are members of a particular ethnic and/or social class.

Sometimes, speakers of particular dialects that are nonstandard find it difficult to communicate in the wider linguistic environment because their dialect differs in its system of sound and grammar from the variety of language spoken in the wider environment. Also, their nonstandard dialect may cause negative reactions in others who do not speak the nonstandard dialect. Finally, children who speak nonstandard dialects have difficulty achieving in school.

The differences between American dialects are not so great. Speakers of various American dialects can understand each other. In some countries the dialects of the language spoken are so different in sound, grammar, and vocabulary that communication between speakers of various dialects is extremely difficult. For example, some of the dialects in Italy and in China are so different from each other that it is as if some people in those countries are speaking different languages instead of varieties of

the same language. Fortunately, this is not the case in America. Culturally disadvantaged Negro and Appalachian pupils can communicate with speakers of standard English, but communication is difficult and their dialects often cause negative reactions in listeners. These pupils can also understand standard English much better than their own speech indicates--that is, their understanding of standard English is not as limited as their ability to speak standard English.

Standard English is a kind of universal dialect in America that is understood by all speakers of English. Furthermore, culturally disadvantaged pupils have had practice in listening to standard English (in school, from radio and television, from movies, from contact with speakers of standard English, etc.). In fact, speakers of nonstandard dialects can understand standard English much better than speakers of standard English can understand nonstandard dialects. The stereotype of the head-scratching, foot-shuffling Negro trying to communicate with a Caucasian has probably been caused by the Negro's frustration from trying to make the listener understand him rather than the Negro's submissiveness or docility.

Development of Dialects

Some of the reasons dialects have developed are early settlement history of a particular group, population migrations, and physical and social barriers that isolate a particular group. These three reasons--especially the last--explain the development of the Negro and Appalachian dialects.

Negroes spoke a foreign language when they first came to this country. In fact, they spoke many foreign languages, because Negro slaves brought into this country did not come from the same African culture. The foreign languages they spoke undoubtedly interfered with their efforts to learn English. Slavery did not offer the best conditions to learn standard English, and the social isolation built into slavery compounded the problem and reinforced nonstandard language patterns that inevitably developed when speakers of another language tried to learn English. Furthermore, the Negro slaves probably did not have good language models. There is no evidence that overseers were particularly eloquent. Since most Negroes were in the South up to the Civil War, the dialect they developed resembled the dialect spoken by the dominant culture in the South. When Negroes migrated North, they brought their dialect with them. Continued social segregation has not caused them to discard their southern based dialect. Negroes in Northern ghettos speak a dialect that is more like the standard dialect in the South than the standard dialect in the North.

Thus, social isolation is the main cause for the development of the Negro dialect. Furthermore, continued segregation of the Negro population in ghettos perpetuates the dialect.

Mountains and rural spaciousness have acted as physical barriers to cut off Appalachians from the dominant culture. Thus, the dialect they have developed is, to a great extent, a result of physical barriers.

Is There a "Negro Dialect"?

The dialects spoken by many Negro and Appalachian pupils is not the same, although many of the same nonstandard items are found in the language system of both groups. Some people question whether Negroes speak a distinct dialect, or whether the dialect they speak is just a general lower-class dialect spoken by all lower-class people in the South. There is quite a lively controversy on this question among linguists. Also, many Negroes oppose the view that Negroes speak a distinct dialect. The opposition of many Negroes to whether there is a Negro dialect, especially some Negroes active in civil rights, is not surprising--if Negroes speak a distinct dialect, this is one more mark of difference that can retard assimilation. Also, some Negroes are opposed to the point of view that there is a Negro dialect because they equate anything identifiably Negro as something negative. Their reaction, too, is not surprising, because things identifiably Negro have caused their alienation from the dominant culture. On the other hand, the more militant Negroes have the opposite point of view that there is a Negro dialect, and they take pride in its existence. Their point of view is probably a result of the newly found identity growing out of the civil rights struggle that tends to accentuate traits identifiably Negro.

Research conducted at the Center of Applied Linguistics in Washington, D. C., indicates that there is a Negro dialect--a variety of English spoken by many Negroes that differs from standard English and other varieties of English. William Stewart, one of the chief investigators in the Urban Language Study (a study of the speech of Negro children in Washington, D. C. being conducted at the Center of Applied Linguistics, has concluded that there is a Negro dialect. Furthermore, the research of Stewart suggests that the dialect is relatively uniform among culturally disadvantaged Negroes throughout the United States, and that it differs from comparable nonstandard dialects spoken by other groups.[1]

Research on the speech of Negroes in Harlem conducted at Columbia University by William Labov reached similar conclusions: ". . . many features of pronunciation, grammar and lexicon are closely associated with Negro speakers--so closely as to identify the great majority of Negro people in Northern cities by their speech alone."[2] These two investigators, William Stewart and William Labov, have concluded that there is a Negro dialect. Research on the speech of Negroes conducted by other investigators has reached similar conclusions. Even if there is not a variety of English spoken exclusively by Negroes, the fact is the great majority of culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils speak a nonstandard variety of English.

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[1]William Stewart, "Observations on the Problems of Defining Negro Dialect," (mimeographed paper published by the Center of Applied Linguistics, Washington).

[2]William Labov, "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Nonstandard English," (paper read at the N. C. T. E. Spring Institute on New Directions in Elementary English, Chicago, March, 1966).

Characteristics of the Negro Dialect

The features of the Negro dialect that deviate from standard English and systematically interfere with the efforts of Negro pupils in learning standard English or reading standard English have been isolated. Many of these features are found in the speech of Appalachian pupils and other speakers of nonstandard dialects, and not all of the features are found in the speech of every Negro pupil.

It is important for teachers to understand the language system of culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils so that instruction can be directed at the interferences caused by their language. Also, teachers can more effectively teach reading to these pupils and understand them. The same thing, of course, can be said of culturally disadvantaged Appalachian pupils. Some of the features of the Negro dialect that grossly deviate from standard English are listed below. Following the list, an approach for teaching these pupils standard English is discussed (the approach applies to teaching standard English to Appalachians and other speakers of nonstandard dialects). Characteristics of the Negro dialect are:

Simplification of final consonant clusters. Words ending in consonant clusters often have the last consonant sound omitted. For example, hold--hol; rift--rif; past--pas; disk--dis. Leaving off the final consonant creates a great many more homonyms in the speech of Negro pupils than there are in the speech of standard English speakers. In addition, leaving off final consonant sounds causes Negro pupils to form plurals of some words in a nonstandard way; for example, desks--desses; tests--tesses. Note how the plural formation follows the system of formulating plurals of words in standard English: words ending in the same sound as the nonstandard tes (test) or des (desk), add another syllable for the plurals (written es).

Inflectional endings not pronounced. This feature is especially marked for the preterit of words (past tense) that is represented by the letters -ed in writing.

R-lessness. Final sound represented in writing by the letter r often left off. Words like door, store, floor, and four are pronounced as if they are the words dough, stow, flow, and foe. Again, final r-lessness creates many homonyms in the speech of Negroes. This sound is sometimes omitted when it occurs in the medial position.

L-lessness. Final sound represented in writing by the letter l often left off. Words like tool and pail are pronounced as if they are the words too and pay. This sound is sometimes omitted when it occurs in the medial position.

Substitution of the sound represented in writing by the letter d for the sound represented in writing by the letters th at the beginning of words. Words like this, that, those, the are pronounced as if they

are spelled dis, dat, dose, da (this substitution occurs with the voiced sound--vocal chords vibrating--represented in writing by the letters th).

Substitution of the sound represented in writing by the letter f for the sound represented in writing by the letters th at the end of words. Words like with, mouth, path are pronounced as if they are spelled wif, mouf, paf (plural of these words are moufs and pafs). When the sound occurs in the medial position, the sound represented in writing by the letter v is sometimes substituted (mother--mover; brother--brover).

Differences in individual words. For example, the words credit, ask, children, and whip are pronounced as if they were spelled credick, ax, chilerun, and whup. There are many individual words that differ in pronunciation from standard English pronunciation.

Common word groups and phrases blended. Commonly used word groups like "I don't know" or "Come here" or "What did he say?" are pronounced as "Iowno" and "Commere" and "Whaeesay."

Substitution of they for their. The word they is often used in place of the word their. For example, the sentence "They left their books in the locker" is "They left they books in the locker."

Substitution of them for those. The word them is often used in place of the word those. For example, the sentence "Give me those books" is "Give me them books." The word them is often used as the plural marker for following words in a sentence: "Them book in the locker" (the verb are omitted).

Addition of a plural sound (represented by the letter s in writing standard plurals) to irregular plurals. The plurals of child, man, woman, and foot are childrens, mens, womens, and feets. Words that form irregular plurals like wife, knife, wolf, and loaf are pronounced in their plural forms as wifes, knifes, wolfs, and loafs (words ending in the sound represented in writing by the letter f have just the sound represented in writing by the letter s added--these words are not changed to their plural forms plus the plural ending sound like mens and childrens).

Double negative. Sentences like "I don't have a pencil" or "None of the boys have pencils" are "I don't have no pencil" and "Don't none of them boys have no pencils."

Double subjects. Sentences like "My brother is a baby" and "That car lost its brakes" are "My brother he (is) a baby" and "That car it lost its brakes."

Omission of the agreement sound for third person singular, present tense verbs. This omission is one of the most frequent features of the Negro dialect. Sentences like "He walks the dog every day" and

"My father goes to work on the bus" are "He walk the dog every day" and "My father go to work on the bus."

Addition of the sound represented in writing by the letter s to third person plural, present tense verbs when the subject is they. Sentences like "They walk the dog every day" and "They look nice in their new clothes" are "They walks the dog every day" and "They looks nice in they (their) new clothes." (Sometimes, the sound represented in writing by the letter s is added to first person singular and plural, present tense verbs: "I walks" and "We walks.")

The past tense and past participle forms of some irregular verbs reversed. The past participle forms of irregular verbs are used for the simple past tense. For example, the sentences "My father took a bus to work this morning" and "He went to the store" are "My father taken a bus to work this morning" and "He gone to the store." The past tense form instead of the past participle form of some irregular verbs is used in the present perfect tense. For example, "My father has taken a bus" and "He has gone to the store" are "My father have (has) took a bus" and "He have (has) went to the store." Other irregular verbs that are reversed in this manner are: write, see, do, run. (Some irregular verbs have the preterit ending sound represented in writing by the letters -ed added to their base forms in the past and present perfect tenses: throwed and have throwed instead of threw and have thrown; knowed and have knowed instead of knew and have known.)

The word done sometimes substituted for have in present perfect tense. Sentences like "I have walked to school" and "I have gone to school" are "I done walked to school" and "I done gone to school." Often, the substitution of done for have makes a statement emphatic.

Nonstandard use of the verb to be. The difference in the use of the forms of to be are so great in the Negro dialect that it is impossible to cover them all with one heading. This verb, to be, is the most deviant feature from standard English in the speech of many Negroes. Some of the most outstanding deviations are:

> Present and present progressive tense--The standard form of to be is omitted in sentences like "He is going" and "Mary is running" ("He going" and "Mary running"); the standard form of to be is omitted in sentences like "He is busy" and "He is here" ("He busy" and "He here"). The sentence "He busy" means "He is busy at this moment"; the sentence "He here" means "He is here at this moment." To show that someone is regularly "busy" or "here" at a particular time the dialect has the following form: "He be busy" and "He be here." To show that someone is continually "busy" or "here" (that is, all the time) the dialect has this form: "He bes busy" and "He bes here."
>
> Past tense--The form was used in first, second, and third persons, singular and plural past tense (We was, you was, they was).

Present perfect tense--The word have omitted in sentences like "I have been here" and "The meals have been cooked" are "I been here" and "The meals been cooked."

Future perfect tense--The forms be done substituted for will have in sentences like "We will have gone" and "I will have been to school" are "We be done gone" and "I be done been to school."

These are some of the outstanding features in the speech of many culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils. Again, it must be pointed out that many of these features are found in the speech of Appalachian and other speakers of nonstandard English. But all of these features are frequently found in the speech of culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils--they are so frequently found in the speech of so many culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils that their speech constitutes a variety of English that can be labeled the Negro dialect.

Slang

In addition to these sound and grammatical features in the speech of many culturally disadvantaged Negro pupils, one other feature must be mentioned: Negroes have many slang words that are unique to the Negro subculture. Like the slang of other groups, this slang vocabulary of Negroes keeps changing--new words are constantly added while old ones are discarded. There is, however, a "core" of slang words that lasts and resists the normal tendency of slang to be dropped by a group. One of the influences for dropping slang words from the Negro dialect seems to be the acquisition of these slang words by the dominant culture. As soon as the dominant culture begins to use a slang word, Negroes discard it. The same thing seems to happen to teen-age dances--many of the teen-age dances originated in the Negro subculture and were discarded when the teen-agers in the dominant culture learned them (the Watusi and Swim dances are two examples).

Many Negro pupils often do not realize that many of the words they use are considered slang (nonstandard) by the dominant culture. Older Negro pupils, however, learn by experience or otherwise that many of these words are nonfunctional in the dominant culture. Since Negro pupils often lack synonyms that are standard English words and they have, instead, slang words for synonyms, they often are handicapped in their ability to communicate with others outside their subculture.

The slang vocabulary of Negroes is enormous (by comparison with the dominant culture) and extremely colorful. Further, the slang vocabulary reflects their subculture (their way of life) and the things that are important or common in their subculture. This phenomenon is consistent with vocabulary growth for any cultural group. For example, the Eskimos have a great many words for snow because it's so much a part of their environment and so important to their survival. Negroes have a great many words (slang) for Caucasians because Negro-Caucasian relationships are so

critical in this country. Some of these words are: ofays (pig latin for foe), fays, grays, Mr. Charlie, Miss Ann, the man, whitey, pearls. Each one of these words has a special meaning. For instance, "Miss Ann" is an affectatious white woman with a marked attitude of superiority, and "pearls" are young attractive white girls (young attractive Negro girls are "sapphires"); "fays" is a term referring to all Caucasians in a kind of neutral way, but "whitey" is a derogatory term. The slang is metaphorically rich, as above examples illustrate. Other examples of rich metaphors in Negro slang are: "a rib" (a girl friend); "tore up" "wasted" (drunk); and a "hog" is a Cadillac automobile (it is large, it does wallow smoothly down the road, and it does eat up a lot of money). There are hundreds of examples that can be listed to illustrate the rich metaphoric nature of Negro slang. Slang in itself is not bad--what is bad is that too many Negro pupils lack other synonyms that are standard English words. On the other hand, the school could utilize this vast slang vocabulary to teach many of the devices in poetry.

Teaching Standard English to Speakers of Nonstandard Dialects

Now that the dominant features of the Negro dialect have been identified, the approach for teaching them standard English can be discussed. This approach also applies to teaching Appalachian pupils standard English (the approach can be used with speakers of a foreign language, too, except that standard English is not taught as an alternate dialect--it is taught as a second language). The essence of the approach is that (1) language instruction should focus on those interference points and drills should be designed to deal with these; (2) standard English should be taught as an alternate dialect to be used in appropriate situations. These points have been mentioned in Part I of this unit. They are mentioned here for emphasis. In addition, teaching standard English as an alternate dialect applies to upper elementary grade and secondary pupils. The language program for younger pupils should emphasize sound discrimination and encouragement in speaking in their own language (as discussed in Part I of this unit).

The first step in the kind of language teaching approach suggested here is for teachers to accept the language of the pupils. In other words, teachers must quit rejecting the language of the students. After all, language is a very personal thing--it's an identity label, and to reject the pupils' language is to reject the pupils. Furthermore, degrading the pupils' language degrades them and all those who speak their language--parents, relatives, friends, neighbors--their primary group. Finally, how can the pupils be expected to accept another language system if their own is not accepted?

The second step in this kind of approach is to determine the items in the pupils' speech that require the focus of instruction. The nonstandard features that frequently occur in the speech of many Negroes have been listed above. The same kind of list can be made for Appalachian

pupils. Not all of these features listed for Negroes, however, will occur in the speech of every Negro pupil (and not all of the features that frequently occur in the speech of Appalachian pupils will be found in the speech of every Appalachian pupil). Thus, classroom teachers must determine what nonstandard items need attention in the speech of those particular pupils they teach. In other words, a diagnosis must be conducted. The purpose of the diagnosis is to identify the most deviant and frequent nonstandard features in the speech of the pupils. Teachers don't need to be trained linguists in order to do this. All it requires is an attentive ear. The tape recorder is a valuable aid in this simple diagnosis. The speech of the pupils can be recorded, and the recordings can be played over again to check for nonstandard items. Another diagnostic method is to look at the writing of pupils. Often the nonstandard features of their speech occur in their writing. For example, Negro pupils often omit the letter s from third person singular, present tense verbs; or their nonstandard use of to be is reflected in their writing. Finally, another simple diagnostic procedure is to listen to the oral reading of pupils. The nonstandard features of their speech are reflected in their oral reading, too. Most important, however, is the first suggestion made for diagnosis: open up the ears and listen to the speech of the pupils analytically instead of critically.

After the nonstandard items in the pupils' speech needing attention have been identified (remember, only the most frequent and deviant ones should be considered), instruction that focuses on these items to teach pupils an alternate way of expressing themselves can begin. First, however, it is necessary to begin to develop certain concepts of language. These concepts should be introduced early and reinforced throughout the language program for speakers of nonstandard language. These concepts are listed here not because they are introduced before actual instruction on particular nonstandard speech items begins, but because these concepts are so important for successful learning and they must be continually extended and reinforced throughout the language program. These concepts are:

1. There are various language systems in our society. If possible, have the pupils listen to recordings of various dialects to note the differences between them. The pupils should recognize that a Tennessee Mountain dialect is appropriate in the Tennessee Mountains, or that the Negro dialect is appropriate for speakers of this variety.

2. Pupils should understand the reasons that dialects develop (the social and geographical reasons should be emphasized).

3. People can speak more than one variety of English. This concept can be illustrated by pointing out examples in movies or TV or by pointing out what is commonly referred to as levels of speech that exist within one dialect. Also, teen-age slang can be used to illustrate this concept.

4. The language system that communicates ideas and feelings effectively and the language system that is comfortable for speaker and listener is appropriate.

5. Standard English is the variety of English that is understood by most people--regardless of the particular varieties of English they speak. Thus, standard English is a kind of universal dialect in our society. Also, pupils should understand that standard English is the variety of English used in many of the important situations of our society.

6. Pupils must understand and recognize those situations in which standard English is appropriate.

7. Standard English should be learned as an alternate dialect to be used in appropriate situations.

8. Pupils should understand the social, vocational, and academic benefits of learning standard English.

Lessons to teach standard English should follow certain steps. Again, the lessons focus on the most frequent and deviant features of the pupils' speech: These are the features that cause the greatest interference. Each lesson should deal with only one interference at a time, although standard items that have been taught can and must be reinforced in all subsequent lessons. This can be done by including the standard items in drills. For example, if the item being worked on is the nonstandard present progressive tense of the verb to be (He going to the store) pupils can be given drills repeating the standard pattern of the verb, and these patterns can contain sounds worked on in a previous lesson (He is going to the store with his brother to buy that tooth brush). Sounds should be reinforced in lessons on grammatical items, and grammatical items can be reinforced in lessons on sound items. The steps in a lesson should be:

1. Select one sound or grammatical item to teach.

2. Get the pupils to hear the sound or recognize the grammatical structure.

3. Get the pupils to reproduce the standard item.

4. Get the pupils to hear or recognize the difference between the standard item and the equivalent nonstandard item.

5. Get the pupils to discriminate between the standard and nonstandard item (i.e., have the pupils select the word that ends with an /r/ sound from the following words: door, stow, for, foe, floor, go, etc., or have the pupils select the words in the following list that begin with the sound represented in writing by the letters th: the, that, than, Dan, this, dish, doze, those, etc.).

6. Get the pupils to use the standard item in their speech. This is best accomplished in role-playing situations. Role playing is effective because it (1) presents a situation in which the pupils are less self-conscious; and, (2) teaches the pupils the kinds of situations in which standard English is appropriate.

These are the basic steps in a language lesson. The kinds of drills to include in the lessons are best illustrated by presenting sample lessons. Sample lessons are presented on the following pages. Of course, these sample lessons can't contain every kind of drill that can be used. They do, however, illustrate the basic approach and some of the types of drills that can be included in language lessons. The drills can be put on tape. In this way, they can be repeated (spaces in the tape must be provided to give time for pupils' responses). Many of the techniques have been borrowed from teaching English as a second language. Any good book on this subject will give classroom teachers many suggestions for making drills to teach standard English to Negro and Appalachian pupils who speak nonstandard dialects.

Each of the sample lessons deals with nonstandard features that occur frequently in the speech of Negro pupils. These lessons are samples, and they are intended to illustrate the approach and some of the types of drill in teaching language as described here. These lessons are not intended as actual lessons to be taught.

SAMPLE LESSON 1

Noun Plurals

Objectives: To understand the plural ending for regular nouns.

To develop standard pronunciation of regular noun plurals.

Procedures:

1. (Have pupils read the sentences that follow and pay particular attention to the underlined words in each sentence.)

Give this ball to that player.
Give these balls to those players.

A dog is chasing the cat.
Two dogs are chasing four cats.

A bus is parked outside the school.
Ten buses are parked outside the school.

2. Listen to the pairs of sentences as I say them. Pay close attention to the underlined words in each sentence, particularly the ending sounds of the underlined words:

(Read the sentences in Number 1, above.)

Did you hear the sounds that were added to the underlined words in the second sentence of each pair? I'll read the second sentence in each pair, again . . . . These sounds were added to the underlined words because the words are plurals . . . . that is, the words refer to two or more things. Most words take an ending sound when they refer to two or more things. Look at the pairs of sentences again. Notice that there are other words in the sentences that make the underlined words take the ending plural sounds. For example, this ball, these balls; that player, those players; a dog, two dogs; a bus, ten buses. Now you will practice saying the ending plural sounds. Look at the lists of words (words on the chalkboard or worksheet).

List I

pot--pots
night--nights
book--books
bank--banks
cup--cups
street--streets
cuff--cuffs
week--weeks
fight--fights
puff--puffs

Look at the first pair of words in List I. The words are: pot--pots. I'll say the words again. This time, listen carefully to the ending

sound for each word: pot--pots. Now, you say each word after me: pot --pots. The first word--pot--is singular. The second word--pots--is plural and the plural sound has been added to the word. I will say each pair of words in List I. You say the pair of words after me. Be sure to pronounce the ending sounds of each word in the pair. The plural ending sound for all words in the list is like the plural ending sound of pots. Here is the first pair. Repeat the pair after me.

(Teacher says pair, pupils repeat the pair)

Now look at the first pair of words in List II (words on the chalkboard or worksheet). We'll do the same kind of drill with these words as we did with the words in List I. Again, listen carefully to the ending sounds of the words in each pair. Say each pair after me:

List II

dog--dogs	friend--friends
car--cars	wave--waves
rib--ribs	chair--chairs
ring--rings	bag--bags
song--songs	pin--pins
paper--papers	sin--sins

(List I and List II are separated because the plural ending sounds are not really the same, although the ending sounds for words in both lists are represented in writing by the letter s. Words in List I end with the sound /s/; words in List II end with the sound /z/).

3. Listen to these groups of words as I say them. There are three words in each group. Two of the words are the same, the other is different. I will say one of the words in the group twice. I will say the other one once. Tell me the word I say twice. Listen carefully to the ending sounds of each word. The ending sound will let you know the word to point out. For example, if I say: dogs--dog--dogs you point out dogs --d-o-g-s--because that is the word I said twice. Here is another example: cup--cup--cups. Which word did I say twice? Let's begin the drill:

book	books	book
bag	bag	bags
songs	songs	song
weeks	week	weeks
street	street	streets
rib	ribs	ribs
cuffs	cuffs	cuff
girls	girls	girl
pin	pins	pin
chairs	chair	chairs

4. Look at the first pair of words in List III. Listen to me say the first pair of words. bus--buses. I'll say the pair again . . . bus--buses. All of the words in List III have the same plural ending that buses has. The plural ending of words in List III rhymes with fizz. Listen to the singular form of bus, again. Now this time you say it after me . . . . Let's say the words in List III. Again, listen to each pair and pay particular attention to the ending sounds. Then repeat each pair after me.

List III

bus--buses	bunch--bunches
glass-glasses	church--churches
place--places	wish--wishes
box--boxes	hedge--hedges

5. Listen to the following sentences. Pay close attention to the plural ending sounds of words in each sentence. After I say a sentence, you say it. Let's say one example.

Pack all the pots and pans in boxes.

Now, say each sentence after me. Remember to say the plural ending sounds clearly. Here is the first sentence:

Pots shouldn't call kettles black.
Kettles seldom like the jokes of pots.
Jokes told by pots often lead to fights with kettles.
Girls and boys should be friends.
Instead of being friends, their quarrels make them act like wild dogs.
Buses in bunches pass by stores and churches.
Glasses are cylinders, but boxes are squares.
Judges in courts sit on high benches.
Churches are places where sins are disgraces.

Now you are going to have a harder drill. Listen to the following sentences. The nouns in the sentences are singular. You repeat the sentences, changing the nouns to plural. You may also have to change other words in the sentences to make them agree with the noun plurals. For example, if I say:

The cup is over there.

You answer:

The cups are over there.

In the first sentence, cup is singular. In the second sentence, cup was changed to cups. Also, the word is in the first sentence was changed to are, because the verb are is used with plurals. Listen to the example again . . . .

Here is another example. This time, you repeat the sentence changing the singular noun to plural, and any other word in the sentence that needs changing. After you say the sentence, I'll say it the way you should have said it. Then you say it the same way. Don't forget--I'll say the sentence, you say the sentence changing singular nouns to plural, then I'll say the sentence in its plural form, and you repeat it right after me. Let's try it. Here is the sentence:

The bus does not stop here (pupils repeat in plural).
The buses do not stop here (pupils repeat this after the teacher so that their correct response is reinforced).

Now, we're ready to do the drill. Remember, change all singular nouns to plurals:

I don't like to wash the dish.
I don't like to wash the dishes.

The car is parked.
The cars are parked.

The joke was not funny.
The jokes were not funny.

Paper and pencil is necessary.
Paper and pencils are necessary.

The boy and girl ate all the cake.
The boys and girls ate all the cakes.

6. (Nouns ending in /st/ and /sk/ are special problem words. Many pupils do not pronounce the final /t/ and /s/ sounds in the singular forms of words ending in /st/ and /sk/ sounds; thus, the plural forms of words ending in /st/ and /sk/ are pronounced like the plurals of words in List III--<u>boxes</u>, <u>churches</u>, <u>buses</u>, etc.).

Have the pupils look at word List IV (on the chalkboard or worksheet):

List IV

wrist	wrists
test	tests
desk	desks
chest	chests
mask	masks
fist	fists
tusk	tusks

Look at the words in List IV. These words are special problem words because their ending sounds are often left off of their singular form. I will say the singular form of each word. Listen carefully to the ending sound for each word:

(Pronounce singular forms)

This time, you say the singular form of the words after me. I'll say a word, then you say the word. Be sure to pronounce the ending sound. Here is the first word:

(Pupils pronounce singular forms after the teacher)

Now, let's see if you can really hear the ending sounds of other words like those you just said. I'll say a pair of words. You repeat the pair of words. If the pair of words ends with the same sound, you say "same" after you repeat the pair; if the pair of words ends with different sounds, you say "different" after you repeat the pair. Let's try one example: say the following pair of words after me, and also tell me if their ending sounds are same or different. Here is the pair:

guess--guest

Now, let's do some more. Tell me if the ending sounds are same or different after you say each pair. Here is the first pair:

vest--west
task--west
task--mask
chest--mass
pass--pest

7. Look at the plural forms of the words in List IV. The plural ending of these words is pronounced the same as the plural ending sound in hats, pots, jokes, and cakes. The plural ending sound for the words in List IV does not add a syllable. I will say the singular and plural forms of the words in List IV. Listen carefully to the ending sounds of both forms.

8. Repeat the following sentences after me. Be careful. Some of the words ending with noun plural sounds are tricky.

Babies chew their fists.
There are scratches on all the desks.
The tomatoes were eaten by garden pests.
The tests are in the boxes on the desks.
Ants are pests that a housewife detests.
Cats who are pests molest birds in their nests.

SAMPLE LESSON 2

Third Person Singular Present Tense

Objectives: To pronounce the third person singular present tense agreement sound at the end of these verbs.

To develop standard usage of third person singular present tense.

Procedures:

1. (Have the pupils be ready to use the following list of words. Have the pupils look over the words to see how many they recognize.)

I	II
work	works
make	makes
walk	walks
take	takes
put	puts
meet	meets
live	lives
laugh	laughs
run	runs
play	plays
call	calls
go	goes
use	uses
catch	catches
dance	dances

Look at the list of words in the first column. I will say the words in Column I. You say each word after me.

Now look at the words in Column II. An ending sound has been added to each word. These ending sounds are the same as the sounds you learned for the noun plural in the previous lesson. For example, the first word in List II works has an ending sound like pots; the last word in the list dances has an ending sound like boxes. Even though these words have ending sounds like noun plurals, they are not nouns because they cannot be used as subjects of sentences. These words are verbs, and the ending sound is used with certain subjects. Now, you will have practice saying the words in Column II with the words in Column I. I'll say a pair of words and you repeat the pair of words after me. For example, I'll say work--works; then, you say the pair after me.

(Word Lists I and II by pairs)

Now I'll use some of the words from Lists I and II in pairs of sentences. You repeat each pair after me. For example, I'll say: I work after school. He works on the weekend. Then you say the sentences. Be sure to say the ending sounds for the words from List II that are used in sentences:

They walk to school every day.
He walks to school sometimes.

We live on the first floor.
She lives on the second floor.

I never take a nap.
My little brother takes a nap every day.

I make money.
It makes me rich.

Older children seldom catch colds.
A baby catches cold easily.

2. (Have the pupils tell the difference between the underlined words in each pair of sentences. Next, lead the pupils to recognize that the ending sound is added to the underlined words in the second sentence of each pair.)

3. I will say four sentences, and you repeat each sentence after me. Listen for the word dance. Sometimes dance will not take an ending sound. For example, you will hear me say, "I like to dance." Sometimes dance will take an ending sound. For example, you will hear me say, "Tom dances terribly." Present tense verbs take an ending when they are used with subjects like he, she, it, Tom, the boy, a little girl, Mary. The special word to listen for in the sentences is dance. However, the sentences contain other verbs that take an ending sound when they are used with subjects like she, he or Tom. Listen for these other verbs that have an ending sound also.

I like to dance, but Tom dances terribly.
When we dance, he steps all over my feet.
He thinks he dances well.
Tom needs to take lessons.

In sentences like the ones we just had, the ending sound is put on the verbs when the subject is he, she, it, or a person's name. In the sentences you just repeated, the ending sound was put on for: Tom dances, he steps, he thinks, he dances, and Tom needs. Subjects like he, she, it, or Tom are third person. The words we use for things are third person also. Whenever a subject is third person and the verb is present tense, the verb should have an ending sound.

Repeat these sentences after me. Notice the ending sound for verbs that are third person singular, present tense:

My little brother watches Batman all the time.

He thinks Batman is the greatest.

He tries to imitate Batman.

He puts on an old kitchen curtain for a cape and he wears a super-market grocery bag over his head for a mask.

He waits for me to walk in the door from school, then he jumps out from behind the door.

I always act as if he scares me, and when I do, that scares him.

Then he cries. I always end up laughing while "Batman" cries.

Now, pay attention. This drill will be a little different. First, I will make a statement. Then, I'll ask you a question. You answer the question. For example, if I say, "I work every day. What does he do?" You answer, "He works every day." Here is another example: "I like to dance. What does Mary like to do?" You answer, "Mary likes to dance."

I ask questions in class every day. What does he do?
I sit in the front of the room. Where does the teacher sit?
Willie Mays likes to play baseball. What does Jimmy like to do?
I know the answer to the next question. What do you know?
I pass in all my subjects. What do you do?
Tom lives three blocks from school. Where does Mary live?
I need to stop talking. What does your friend need to do?

General Suggestions for Teaching English to Speakers of Nonstandard Dialects

1. Avoid making value judgments about the pupils' language. Don't refer to their language as "substandard" or "incorrect" or "bad."

2. Constantly refer to the practical and vocational benefits of standard English.

3. Point out the differences between the pupils' language system and standard English. Pupils must hear the differences before they can learn the standard English item.

4. Standard English should be taught as it is spoken.

5. Instruction should concentrate on gross deviations, not on fine grammatical points (i.e., use of whom or as in place of like).

6. Record the speech of pupils often, and have them evaluate each other on those standard items taught up to the point of the recording.

7. Whenever oral reading is done, have the entire class instead of one pupil read the material. This gives oral practice to all the pupils in the class.

8. Furniture in the classroom should be arranged to enable pupils to talk to each other, instead of talking to the front of the room.

9. Teachers should understand the cultural background of the pupils. Since language reflects culture, understanding the total cultural background will help teachers better understand the language of the pupils.

10. Teachers should not attempt to speak the dialect of the pupils--especially if the teachers are not of the same ethnic background.

PART III: THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM OF CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED MEXICAN-AMERICAN PUPILS[1]

Many Mexican-American pupils speak a nonstandard variety of English. The causes of their nonstandard English are not the same as for culturally disadvantaged Negroes and Appalachian pupils who speak dialects of English that are nonstandard. Many Mexican-American pupils speak Spanish as their first language, and this causes interference when they try to learn English. Even those Mexican-American pupils who don't speak Spanish as their first language have Spanish language interferences, because they have grown up in a cultural environment where the English is influenced by Spanish--and this is the variety of English they learned. The specific language problem of many Mexican-American pupils is that they impose the sound and grammar system of Spanish on English. The variety of English they speak is not a dialect in the same sense that the language of Negroes and Appalachians are dialects.

Nonstandard language, however, handicaps Mexican-American pupils in the same ways that nonstandard English handicaps Negroes and Appalachians. It is important for teachers to understand that the interferences are from Spanish; thus, an understanding of Spanish--or, at least an understanding of the interference phenomenon--will help teachers to understand the nonstandard language system of Mexican-American pupils.

Teaching Mexican-American pupils is loaded with sociological-psychological implications. First of all, these pupils are products of a different culture--that is, a way of life that differs both in degree and kind. Few teachers of English are trained to teach English as a second language, and this is how English should be taught to those pupils who speak Spanish or to those pupils who speak Spanish as their first language and very little English. Few teachers speak Spanish, and this can handicap them in working with the interferences caused by Spanish. A lack of preparation to teach English as a second language, and the inability to speak Spanish makes the job of teaching English to Mexican-American pupils difficult. In addition, a lack of understanding of the Mexican-American culture increases the difficulty. Teachers are unable to plan language arts programs that are consistent with the cultural background of Mexican-American pupils. Finally, there is a lack of materials that are effective for Mexican-American pupils. On top of all this, the problem of teaching English is compounded by the limitations caused by the deprivation of the pupils

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[1]With acknowledgements to Phil Hernandez, Consultant, Los Angeles City Schools.

(this includes general handicaps listed throughout this series that are characteristic of all disadvantaged pupils and their learning style).

In general, Mexican-American pupils can be classified as fitting one of four linguistic levels:

1. Pupils who speak more English than Spanish--English is their first language (many speak only English).

2. Pupils who speak more Spanish than English--Spanish is their first language.

3. Pupils who speak English half the time, and Spanish half the time--some of these pupils speak a kind of hodgepodge "Spanglish" that Mexicans call pocho.

4. Pupils who speak only Spanish--these pupils speak no English.

The English of all four groups is influenced by Spanish, and this causes the variety of English they speak to be nonstandard. In other words, their language behavior tends to make English fit Spanish sound and grammar.

Pupils who are more assimilated into the dominant culture (they speak only English, or they speak very little Spanish) will be the group teachers can most easily understand and teach; thus, teachers have less frustration and more satisfaction with this group. Yet, these pupils generally do not learn standard English and they often have a disinterested attitude toward all school work. The reason these pupils don't learn standard English is twofold: first, the English program is not slanted to deal with the particular interferences from Spanish; secondly, their attitude toward learning English (or any subject) is a negative one (as described in Unit Four). The inappropriateness of the English curriculum (and the complete curriculum) and their negative attitude toward school are reflected in their declining achievement scores. The longer these pupils stay in school, the farther they fall behind--after the seventh grade, their achievement scores take a remarkable nosedive. The explanation of their declining achievement as grade level increases cannot be explained by examining only the schools. The explanation is contained in the frustration of straddling two cultures. Even though this group of pupils are more assimilated both culturally and linguistically, they still have one foot planted in the Mexican culture, and this creates cultural and linguistic interferences. Still, this is the group that English teachers have the least problems with in teaching standard English. The other three groups must be brought up to this transition level. This can only be done through a meaningful curriculum and, especially through a meaningful English curriculum that fits a particular linguistic background.

Teaching English to the second group of pupils (those who speak more Spanish than English--Spanish is their first language) is as much a sociological-psychological problem as a linguistic problem. These pupils are reluctant to break the strong ties that bind them to their culture; their Spanish is one of the strands in the cultural rope that ties them to their Mexican culture, and this creates problems when teaching them standard English.

In many cases, these pupils are the first generation of their families to be born in the United States. The first five or six years of their lives were spent in a tight family structure that is identifiably Mexican. Spanish is their first language. Their greatest experiences with English are limited to their school contact, and the English program in the schools often does not fit their particular problems. The kind of English program they really need (English as a second language) is not given to them. Instead, the English curriculum (and the whole curriculum) is based on an assumption that all children enter school with certain experiences in their background. A given vocabulary is expected. These pupils need a specialized English program, and when it is not given to them, they become nonachievers and, later, dropouts. What they need is a program that emphasizes language in the primary grades--the approach of this program should deal directly with interference items from their native Spanish. Also, the program should encourage Mexican-American pupils to use oral language.

The third group, the pochos, is the most difficult to understand and accept. Also, they are the most difficult to teach. There is a stronger pull in two directions on this group--the straddling of two cultures affects them more than other groups, and this strong, two-way pull is reflected in their hodgepodge language. They are neither Mexican nor members of the dominant culture. They reject much that is identified with Mexican culture; yet, they hold onto many Mexican cultural patterns. At the same time, the pochos try to adopt characteristics and patterns of the dominant culture that will make them more acceptable. This kind of cultural dualism is represented in their language.

The last group, the Mexicans who speak only Spanish and no English, don't belong in regular classrooms. This group belongs in classrooms that conduct a program of teaching English as a second language. These pupils need instruction only in English, because they will learn little in school until they do learn English.

Teachers should be aware of the nonstandard features of English spoken by Mexican-American pupils. The frequency and nature of the nonstandard items indicates the degree that their English is influenced by Spanish (interference). Listed below are some of the nonstandard pronunciation and grammatical features that are commonly found in the English of Mexican-American pupils.

Difficulty with the English sounds contained in these words: miss--mees; brother--brouther; chair--share; very--bery; cap--cahp; rice--rize.

Accent on wrong syllables: perfectly; office.

Final consonant clusters dropped: Usually, the last consonant sound in a consonant cluster at the end of words is dropped.

Syllable added for preterit ending represented by the letters -ed in writing: jumped--jumpted; talked--talkted.

Use of double negative.

Reversal of past tense form of verbs and past participle form of irregular verbs: He should have gone--He should have went.

End agreement sound not pronounced for third person singular present tense verbs: He runs all the time--He run all the time.

Double subject: That man lives next door--That man he live next door.

Addition of the sound represented in writing by the letter s to irregular plurals: men--mens; children--childrens.

Combining English and Spanish: market--marketo; watch--watcho.

Mexican-American pupils should be given the kinds of exercises that were described in Part II. That is, the specific interferences between their English and standard English should be dealt with in language lessons. These interferences are caused by their Spanish language background. In addition, the language program must encourage Mexican-American pupils to talk--to stop being reluctant speakers.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The ability to speak standard English is necessary for academic, social, and vocational advancement.

2. Nonstandard English systematically interferes with the learning of standard English.

3. Interference occurs because the nonstandard speaker imposes the sound and grammar system of his nonstandard language system onto the sound and structure of standard English: this is structural interference.

4. Nonstandard English is reflected in reading and writing.

5. Standard English is the universal dialect--that variety of English understood by most people in our society, regardless of the particular dialects they speak.

6. Culturally disadvantaged pupils will not learn standard English by being told that their language system is "incorrect" or "wrong" or "bad." Instruction must be fitted to the specific interferences between their language and standard English.

7. The sequence of the language program should be: understanding spoken English; speaking one's own language; reading, writing, and speaking standard English.

8. Standard English should be taught as an alternate dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects; standard English should be taught as a second language to pupils who speak a foreign language.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss additional ways that nonstandard English handicaps individuals socially and vocationally.

2. Give specific examples of how nonstandard English interferes with reading (use examples from a particular group of disadvantaged pupils).

3. Discuss the following statement: Reading instruction should be delayed for culturally disadvantaged pupils.

4. List additional interferences from the Negro dialect.

5. List the interferences from the dialect of Appalachian pupils.

6. Select one nonstandard item from the speech of a particular group. Write drills that:

   a. help the students hear the standard item (sound or grammar);
   b. discriminate between the standard and nonstandard items;
   c. reproduce the standard item; and
   d. use the standard item (role playing).

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